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19 January 1959

MEMORANDUM FOR: Executive Officer/DCI

SUBJECT : Comment on Recommendations by Management Staff on Cable Control Officer

REFERENCE : Management Staff Memorandum dated 16 October 1958, Subject: Cable Traffic

1. While I am perfectly willing to admit that the group count of our current cable load is staggering, I do not think the creation of a separate position such as that outlined in reference is the solution to the problem. It seems to me that we do not need more regulations, nor more enforcers of regulations. I agree with [] opinion that the basic reason for excessive cable traffic is a lack of real interest in the subject all along the line. If I may quote from [] note to me on this subject:

"Anybody appointed to this job would have to be so senior and so experienced that he would surely be needed more elsewhere. He would have to swing a great deal of weight on strictly operational questions to be effective -- e.g. in attacking abuses of PP Staff's long guidance cables to too many addressees, he would have to know which stations are likely to use the guidance, and which customarily ignore it, and why.

"To keep up a correspondence with the field on this subject (where the abuses are greatest) would require not one man but a staff, probably steadily increasing in accordance with Parkinson's Law. Even ignoring the field, this proposal means too much paper work -- a report on every infraction (and presumably a rebuttal and a counter-rebuttal, and meetings, etc.), a monthly report to the DCI (would he read it?), more reports to Deputies, Staff and Division Chiefs, etc."

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I might add that the basic decision whether to send a cable is often an operational matter, and one which I do not think will be dealt with productively by the addition of a Cable Control Officer, unless he be of such experience as to be able to talk as an equal on substantive and operational matters with division chiefs.

2. I do not mean to recommend that we do nothing. I understand that finding acceptable (i. e., speedy) substitutes for cables is progressing on two fronts (teletape and better handling of regular dispatches), and I think priority attention should continue to be given in this field. I think we should keep the pressure on the Department of State to improve their courier-accompanied pouch service.

3. Mechanical solutions may well prove to be our eventual salvation. In the meantime, I suspect that some concentrated effort by cable originators and releasers, including myself, to reduce both the number and length of cables could yield a significant reduction.

4. If, however, additional procedure is to be tried as a temporary palliative in this situation, I would suggest as first choice that the person to fill the new job be someone of very considerable operational experience, if he could be spared. Although [] is most expert as a communications officer, his experience and great ability are in a field quite apart from the basic problem.

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